

OF HILLS



BY

TOM LAKEMAN

OF SEA AND LAND,
OF HILLS, OF LOVING
TIMES

To those who make this journey—

The photographs, verse and description are to bring places near or to take readers far—at thought speed.

To the man from the hills by the Afghan border—on the cover—then a glimpse of Kashmir; to Battlesbury on the steep western edge of Salisbury Plain. To Kashmir again—from Srinagar to Haramukh—then homeward to the cliffs of Devon.

To the Deosai Plains, not far from the Roof of the World, to India in England, to children, to the Indian forest, by Delhi, through the Red Sea to Malta, ending with Pir Guhl and the man from the hills.

The book was formed when a holiday was needed and it is hoped that others too will find holiday in these pages. May this book help, in some small way, the National Trust. After the war, what profit there is from the book will go gladly to help the Trust; during the war it will be sent to the Royal Tank Regiment Prisoners of War Fund—for those who cannot yet see our shores.

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To
A HAPPY FAMILY
and
to those who make this journey

Our Heritage

May many come and see precious views, but guard them too, as they are still more precious now, when some other things are lost. We treasure for the nation, a painting, but no painting can be as beautiful as unspoilt shores.

The sea was dappled with cloud shadows; the sun silvered great cliffs and the waves by the river bar; white wings soared above a slate-covered cottage. On the shore were small bungalows—they are still there, but can be forgiven as they allow many to live near, and are hidden when looking out over the bay from the hills above. In the bay, close to the shore, was a wild and lovely island.

After 20 years I came again over the hills, and on this island stood a concrete hotel, with a watch tower and tall chimneys. The cry of the sea birds was a plaintive and constant call for the stranger to leave their coves and return at low tide across the sandspit to the mainland, so that the island, the heart of this bay of simple beauty, might live unharmed. Soon we must see true values or these treasures will be lost for ever. They long for natural surroundings—if only such could be given before it is too late.

In some small way, may this book help the National Trust. After the war, what profit there is from the book will go gladly to help the Trust; during the war it will be sent to the Royal Tank Regiment Prisoners of War Fund—for those who cannot yet see our shores.

A KASHMIR HILL

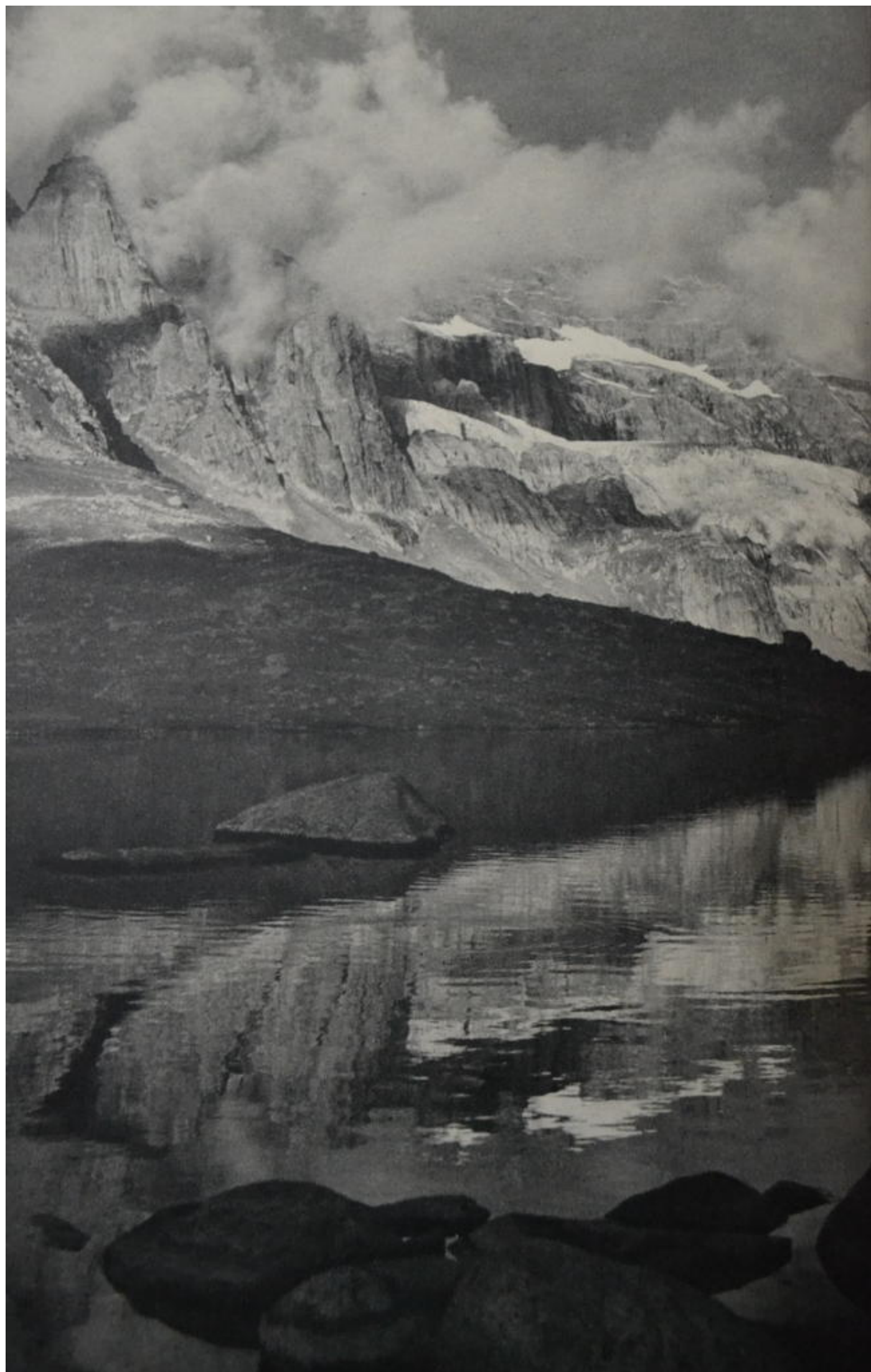
'To lands where, by steep hillside, rivers cry'

This hill stands above the Wangat river, which might be the Dart near Holne Bridge, or any other lively moorland stream running between steep wooded hills.

Seven miles below, the river joins the Sind, which, near Wular Lake, flows into the Jhelum—here slow and deep. The depth can be judged by watching while crews pole their boats and rafts upstream; they walk the length of their craft along a narrow gangway. It is difficult to realise that the walking men remain 'stationary' as they pole and that the craft is passing upstream under their feet. The men face downstream while poling and start at the bow. When the stern comes up to them, they quickly return to the bow with pole raised, to start over again.

Here there is no cry from the river, but, as the Jhelum leaves the Kashmir plain to pass through the Pir Panjal range, it starts to roar. It falls 3000 feet in fifty miles, to 2000 feet above the sea, and through eighty more miles of deep ravine it reaches the plains and Jhelum city—700 feet above the sea. The river forgets the hills and then, after a sandy eight hundred miles, joins the sea, with some of the water from the Wangat river—and from this hill.





‘Of Sea and Land, of Hills, of Loving Times’

‘OF HILLS’

By

TOM ASHLEY LAKEMAN

Frontispiece

‘Above the glaciers rise’

Sunrise on Gangabal, below Haramukh. The lake is about 12,000 feet above the sea. Glacier reflections of green and blue, against the white snow and clouds, are very lovely, as they move with the ripples on the lake.

There is a yearly pilgrimage to Gangabal, as this is one of the legendary sources of the Ganges; some of the pilgrims may have walked a thousand miles, from Central or South India.

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NOTES

Where a verse is opposite a photograph, it refers to that photograph. Except for the simpler verses, the photographs are purposely separated from the verses, but kept in the same order with the exception of 'Mountains cloudheld' which belongs to Haramūkh, and Mechka. The photographs are grouped in four sections.

Gangabāl—Ganga is the Ganges, bāl is a spring.

Buzzard—These fine hawks feed mainly on 'vermin', such as mice and rabbits. Sequer's is pronounced 'Seckers'.

Chaplies—shoes, usually sandals heavily nailed.

Būddha—used here as a colloquial term for 'old man'.

Delhi Main—Delhi main railway station—all India seems to pass here.

Teen sāl—Urdu for 'three years'. Maidān—open fields or plain.

Bārasingh (twelve tined or big horned) are swamp deer similar to Red deer.

Red dog are for India as wolves are to Russia—their packs hunt nearly everything except man. Cicādas are small winged insects.

Nilgai—Blue bull, an ungainly antelope. Sāmbhur and chital—deer.

'Stars in Courses'—the camera time-exposure shows their 'course'.

'Heavenly halo'—the Pole Star is above the dome.

Moon 'cruising'—at about 2000 miles an hour.

Krait or cobra 'laid'—born, as eggs or young snakes.

Juma—Friday, the Moslem equivalent to Sunday.

Kādir—plains of long grass near River Ganges—haunt of wild pig.

'Wisdom's knife'—still leaving life its brilliant unwise acts.

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On these two pages long vowels are marked to help those who are unfamiliar with certain words. Some are marked in 'Contents' and others, in order of appearance, are:

Wūlar—Jhēlum—Shikāra—Ganderbāl—Nāra Nāg—Baramūla—Pīr Panjāl—Ladākh—Khēl (Khail)—Razāni—Afghān—Dēhra Dūn—Sihāwa—Mahanādi—Shāhjehān—Khān—Hindustān—Zām—Shahūr—Nāga—Manipūr—taswīr—Lohāris—Bāli—Rajputāna—Dasāra—Ravāna—Rāma—Sīta—Lakshmāna—Rāmayāna—Hanūman—Maidān (My-dān)—Kūtab—Diwān-i-Khās—Tāj Mahāl—Āgra—Wāna—all with 'ā' as 'ah', 'ī' as 'ee' and 'ū' as 'oo'.

Photogravure by Harrison & Sons Ltd., London

11 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2

I

THE FRAGILE THREAD

SUN flash, on furthest peak, kindled a spark
That smouldered, flamed, then burned with blazing light
And lit far crests and valleys that were dark,
And thus a child was born—the wish to write
Of sea and land, of hills, of loving times.
Thoughts led him back through dying day and night
And gathered harvest on the way—these lines,
To clear the mist of years from memory's sight.
They send a message from a lonely heart
To lands where, by steep hillside, rivers cry—
'May your sheer forms, leave in the mind, some part
Of loveliness, and for life our futures tie
By light and fragile thread for lifetime's span,
Your beauty held by thought-spun web—to man.'

BATTLESBURY

GREEN hill that rises steep and bare,
What countless fights have you seen there?
With clouds, like galleons, ranged behind,
What efforts watched to kill mankind?

When sun is set and hill-tops gold,
Dark stories could this hill unfold,
But better still these tales to hide
In shadows deep, in ditches wide,

And many times attackers came
And left small hillocks without name,
To cover prince and serf alike—
Now rabbits guard the ancient dyke.

Aloof you stand, and watching—sigh
As tank or aircraft pass you by.
I wonder if your thoughts, so wise,
Bring bitter tears to your old eyes.

Yet sometimes your old blood will race,
When modern armies pass your face,
But tears it must most often be
As rain comes often from your lee.

But if this world its face shall change,
Your shadow still will valleys range
And deep inside your wise old head,
You'll wonder where this world will end.

TO HARAMUKH

SHIKARA'S prow swept downstream through
The gabled city. In early light, grey pigeons flew
By homes of mud brick, by seven wooden bridges,
And gleaned the harvest grown on house-top ridges ;
Then tinkling bells called Hindu folk to pray ;
Each bright-roofed temple, flashed cool sunray.

Their pointed roofs of copper, tin and gold
In dawn's kind light, untarnished, mellowed, old,
Gave city, full of darkness, light
Which spread to twisting alley, dark as shadowed night.
Yet turned this city—lotus bud at dawning day—
To faded flower, as sun pierced its depths with searching ray.

Seventh bridge was passed, then to open plain
The River Jhelum, through corn and chenar came,
Deep flowing, silent, past upward toiling craft,
Their boatmen, bow to stern-post, poling—and timber raft
Of chenar trunks where silver-bangled children ride,
Their raft, from current's centre, held close to river's side.

The Jhelum slows near storm-swept Wular Lake—
Blue mountains' mirror—then to its arms Sind river takes
A rushing pathway, willow edged—cold stream from Haramukh
snow fed.

It sweeps through reedy pastures, home of duck,
With mountains cloudheld overhead,
Past terraced corn, heads bowed with heavy yield,
Where bears take ransom from each hard-won field.

Steep track near ruined temple, forest hid and creeper lashed,
Climbs up the mountain valley, clothed with dark fir and ash,
To open hillside, shepherd's home in summer days
Where sheep and children live as one, in simple way,
And swarthy maidens, lightfooted, arms outstretched wide,
Guard flocks from preying eagle and steep hillside.

Then up again through rocky cleft
To higher grassy marg upswept,
Through stone-held birch trees, silver trunked,
To Haramukh enthroned above,
Cold as crystal, pure as love,
A mountain warmed by rising sun, sheer snow-laced rock—
Cruel lovely one !

Unclothed she stood, until a cloud
With loving care her body bound
In lightest shroud, which soon revealed
Her sun-kissed head. Her soul appealed
To guardian winds and glacier wall
To keep her pure, to hear her call.

A holy lake at her feet lies—a jewel—
Above, the glaciers rise.
Her image, kissed as ripples sigh,
Lives as twin sister—deep yet high,
While blue reflections, mirage keep,
And trout, from mountain picture, leap.

On northern side the Erin Pass
Above the lake, through flowers and grass
To rocks and snow-bed, treacherous,
Leads on, through snow-fed streams in sun-fed rush.
Here saxifrage and blue delphinium hide
From icy blast—and life to sun confide.

Then snow like falling blossoms came
Covering deep the mountain's shame
In white-starred pall, now thickening fast.
The queen her fury showed, and lost
Twin sister of the lake, and menfolk hid—
Then as she paused for breath, her lovers fled.

Down twisting track on rocky slope,
From woman's wrath, they slid in hope
That distant village might become
A shelter, from her guarding sons.
But suddenly were storms outpaced—
Then blue sky cleared her ice-calm face.

They toasted corn plucked from the field, fresh walnuts white as
milk inside,
With hunger's sauce a glorious feast—for table-cloth the valley
wide.
Then on again to Ganderbal, where rough-hewn boat in river lay
Close under shady willow trees—down river then, and ripples say—
'Of Srinagar I have heard, from Jhelum's slow and stately
stream,
But feed us water, icy cold, snow kissed by Kashmir's lovely
queen.'

THE AVALANCHE

FAR white peaks in the sleepy sky,
Awakened by sunbeams, striking high,
Suddenly glowed with snowy fire—
Lighting the mountains' icy pyre.

While men watched the mountains flame,
Deep snow whispered a fearsome name.
Death, in his hand a sparkling crown,
Said, as he looked far down, far down—

'Leave to these peaks their silent pride,
Their solitude and steep hillside,
Let flowers live where the log hut stands—
This mountain stays in rocky hands.'

A passing cloud this message heard,
Echoing warning, by misty word,
Of balanced power, of massive force
Resting poised by valley's source.

Sunrays unlocked the crystal store,
And avalanche, with mighty roar,
Came rushing down the mountain peak—
In many homes did women weep.

Like forest fire, with scorching flame,
From smallest spark, inferno came,
As hurricane, to waters still,
Sweeps in to work its raging will.

The melting snow will later bare
The twisted trees uprooted there,
A grave to cover, then unfold—
Those near to mountains must be bold.

THE ERME

A RIVER brown that starts in peat—
A river blue that passes to
The sea, through fields of golden wheat,
And loses name—as angels do.

From granite cliff with lichen'd head,
The moorland far hears sound,
By seagull's mew from river mouth—
By curlew, moorland bound.

From curlew then to raven wild,
The message passes on.
A lovely valley, lovely still,
Rings out with nature's song.

And under blue and under brown
Lie waters cold and clear,
And tides call to the fishes round—
'Your life—come spend it here.'

And salmon flashing, bass and mullet
Pass with the surging tide :
Small dabs and lance, for heron's gullet,
Pause in the sand to hide.

Golden gorse and golden sands,
Come near to see and hear
Our children's joy in happy lands—
Those memories—so dear.

The day will come to hear again
The curlew's wonder cry,
And feel the wonder too, as pain,
When kingfishers flash by.

The peregrine, like shooting star,
Falls on her frightened prey,
And climbing then to hill-top far
Swoops down to cliff-side grey.

While buzzard, lord of granite cliff,
Soars to the heavens above,
And, distant speck in cloudy rift,
Keeps watch for lamb or dove.

But come from sea and river low,
Through haunts as rich and rare
As all the world could find to show—
To moorlands' upper air.

Past Holbeton and Orcheton,
Past Flete and Sequer's Bridge,
Past crooked spire of Ermington
Which gives to Erme this pledge—

'I always will this homage make
To fairest of fair streams,
My leaning spire its guard must take
With all its crooked beams.'

By coach and four, with horn to blow—
The Erme beside us still—
To Ivybridge by road we go,
Through village—then the hill.

The road here stops and wooded path
Leads up to moorland bare,
The curlew's message has been passed—
'The Erme is in our care.'

'THE ISLAND'

GREY-CLIFFED, grass-grown, sea-birds' home,
With coves where green seas leap and foam,
At half tide, waters round you flow
And hide your sand strip deep below.

Swift currents meet in choppy swirl
As strangers—then they closely curl
In crested waves—and waters merge
And rollers, through brown seaweed, surge.

Black shags and cormorants sit in line
On whitened rock, at breeding time,
While gulls' eggs lie between the thrift,
And white wings soar with easy lift.

The Pilchard Inn, where crab-pots stand,
Remains a part of sea-pinks' land,
And fishermen bring tarred boats here,
To mend long nets and drink their beer.

In blue knit jersey, strong sea boot,
They dry their bait for more sea fruit,
And hang on walls, of fishy stink,
Tailed skate—a call to crab-pot's brink.

Far out to sea there pass great ships,
But dark rocks here, with foaming lips,
Guard narrow beaches, wreckage strewn,
Below great cliffs by steep seas hewn.

Here lone seals rest on furthest rock,
And scattered sheep form island's flock.
A roughly walled abandoned field
Gives back to sea, thin soil's bare yield.

Across the bay, stands wild Bolt Tail,
Where ships lie wrecked by south-west gale,
By Avon's bar, sweeps treacherous tide,
And Bigbury bells call riverside.

To westward stand great walls of slate,
Which seas can lap, or show their hate,
By lashing high the red-crowned cliff,
As towering waves, past rock-point, slip.

From Farnicombe, Red Cove to Prawle,
The bay gives up its looted haul
Of sea-smoothed boxes—bamboo staves,
Ends frayed and split by crushing waves.

Sea child you are of Devon shore
As River Dart is to Dartmoor,
And rocky veins of Devon's self
Are kin to you, through sea-bed shelf.

Bolt Tail will guard your shifting sand,
And gale-spiced waves—crests hand in hand—
Will clean your slopes with spumey wind
And leave just you—and Pilchard Inn.

BY THE DEOSAI

AN OPEN plain, by mountains rimmed,
Twelve thousand feet above the sea,
No shelter gives from glacier wind—
A plain where never lives a tree.

Red bear come up, in thawing days,
To catch snow trout in long-claw'd paw,
Snow leopard creep by stealthy ways—
Their call to mate, like rasping saw.

Horned sharpu leap from rocky crag
As warning stone falls down a cliff,
And keen-eyed guarding females lag
To watch, while males to safety slip.

Rare butterfly and snow-born flower
Lend softness to this bleak high land,
While leaping torrents give their power,
As Indus roars for helping hand.

Sheer down, through twenty thousand feet,
Looks Nanga Parbat, cold and clear,
And sees a rumbling silver streak—
The raging Indus, haunt of fear—

Deep ravined, dark in full midday,
Spanned here by spider's thread of rope,
A swaying bridge—a fearsome way
Where man, fainthearted, loses hope.

On narrow track, by snow held fast,
Cross travellers from the world's high roof,
And Zoji La and Baltal Pass
Keep Indus, from Kashmir, aloof.

Near river here the fragile rose—
A child of bitter winter's power—
Grows radiantly and pathways close
With clinging branch and graceful flower.

Rose walled, a crystal stream flows down
To village set by river gorge—
It came from torrent surging brown—
Its waters, laden fruit trees forge.

The Viji pass—her head pink flowered—
Sees Wular Lake in far sunlight,
And cattle graze near log-walled yard,
Lal Bhalu's barrier in the night.

In winter, Deosai lies bound
By thirty miles of windswept white,
While marmot and snow trout hear sound
Of earth's sharp sighs in winter's fight.

THE FRONTIER FORT

A SUNBAKED fort upon a hill, kept guard
On cloud-shadowed hills behind, as hard
As village fighter's strife for wealth or wife,
A colour quilted curtain—river's life.

The river flowed blue clear, in trickling shoals,
Or—live with rocks that rushing waters roll,
Turgid with power from many treeless slopes—
Carried desolation and hill soil—a corn crop's hope.

Past Datta Khel, returning raiders, tired,
Their chaplies worn, their ammunition fired,
Lead stolen camels back to compound wall—
They would not leave such lands—their wild hills call.





' Ruined temple, forest hid and creeper lashed '

This Hindu temple is at Nara Nag, about 7000 feet above the sea ; over a thousand years old, the temple lies on the pilgrims' route to Gangabal. The Wangat river can be seen about fifty yards away to the right.

The track enters the forest beside the small terraced corn-field, which just shows on the left. The path zigzags up the side of this hill for 4000 feet until the open *marg*, with scattered birch trees, is reached.

When the Indian corn is ripening, black Himalayan bear raid the small fields, and each field has a straw-thatched platform from which villagers watch in turn for the raiders. The watchmen seldom have more than sticks for protection, and the raids are frequent and bold. The evening I arrived, one of the villagers showed me deep and badly poisoned scars, where he had been torn by the bear's long claws, while trying to save the crops. I sent him on a pony to Srinagar, about forty miles away, after dressing the wounds. He was a heavily bearded man of fine physique, and should, with hospital treatment, soon have recovered from the result of the fight.

Walnut trees are usually plentiful around these villages—memories of fresh walnuts, and Indian corn, cooked over a wood fire, with plenty of butter, some pepper and salt, and two hands to hold the head of corn, make one feel that a return for this alone might be worth the long journey.

‘ *Preying Eagle* ’

This Himalayan Griffon—*burra gidh* or big vulture—was about nine feet from wing-tip to wing-tip, as large as a lammergeyer. The faint swish of wind through its feathers could be heard, as it passed overhead on its long glide down the valley. Its shadow, as of a cloud, moved over the tree-tops.

This is nearly at the crest of the first steep climb from Nara Nag. Below are the ruined temple and the Wangat river on its way from Gangabal—its source.

Under the pointing cloud, across the valley, is the ‘ Kashmir Hill ’, the first photograph in the book. Haramukh and Gangabal are to the left and out of the picture.





HARAMUKH

'Sheer snow-laced rock—cruel lovely one'

Haramukh on this, the eastern side, is sheer for 4000 feet. To the right, below the glacier, is the holy lake. The trees live half the year in snow, and their weather-beaten shapes tell of high winds and blizzards.

Gujars, or shepherds, with their families and flocks, spend the summer here, feeding on an occasional sheep, goats' milk, and flour brought from Nara Nag. Their shelter homes are made of blankets and rocks—with sheep herded close at night to keep the home warm.

Haramukh is usually clouded during the day—but at sunrise often stands clear, before the hot sun brings cloud from the valleys below.

GANGABAL—AT SUNRISE

'A holy lake at her feet lies—a jewel'

Here is the eastern end of the lake; the glacier, at the western end, is shown in the photograph opposite the title page.

Rising trout break the surface, with an occasional 'plop' from a jumping fish, and here the Wangat river starts its rush down the hillside—towards the sun. There is little other life close under the mountain, except for short grass, small flowers and hurrying clouds.

The track to the Erin Nullah and the Wular Lake, leads westward over two 13,000-foot passes, separated by a steep dip to a valley and a lake. Grey cliffs, 2000 feet high, look down on this lake, and in places seem to overhang it.

Two hours after leaving Gangabal, while we were between the two passes, a blizzard swept down from Haramukh, and it was difficult to see more than two or three yards. It soon cleared but left winter behind, as hills and valley were white with snow.





KILLANMARG—KASHMIR

This *marg* or meadow overlooks Gulmarg, a thousand feet below and to the left. To the right, and three thousand feet above, is Apharwat; her steep slopes, when snow-covered, may avalanche in the hot spring sun. One year, after heavy snow, an avalanche swept down where the sunlight lies, and buried a log hut—flowers grow there now.

Cradled by the summit ridge of Apharwat is Al Pathri lake, frozen or partly frozen throughout most of the year, and a brilliant sea-green in sunlight.

The two clouds, lightly shadowing the hills in the distance, are above the Ferozepore Nullah, which leads to more *margs* and mountains of the Pir Panjal.

The Kashmir valley is to the left, below Gulmarg. Srinagar, the city with corn, grass and flowers on its gabled roofs and with carved riverside balconies, can be seen on clear days over the tall pine trees on the left.









VIJI PASS—BY THE DEOSAI—I

'Her head pink-flowered'

The Viji Pass is south-west of the Deosai plains, about a 'march' from the Deosai by the Burzil Pass. In the evening, a red bear used to climb up the steep slope, on the right of the picture, to look for stray cattle from a walled yard at the top. While watching for the bear, I saw a musk deer, hardly bigger than a large hare—the villagers try to catch them for their musk. The actual pass is in the distance to the right and this side of the far crest; primulas cover the ground as soon as the snow melts.

The plains themselves are mainly over 12,000 feet above the sea, and are not unlike the more level parts of Dartmoor; the streams are the same, cold and full of sound—and trout. These are snow trout, slow and tame, but good to eat; red bear—Lal Bhalu or snow bear—scoop them out with their paws. I fed for ten days on snow trout, which I caught in mid-stream in one hand—easy after 'tickling' brown trout, as a boy. Marmot sitting up by their holes are like large brown squirrels, with a surprising and usually unexpected danger call; they seldom live below 10,000 feet. Sharpu are horned wild sheep.

The snow does not clear from the Deosai until midsummer, and usually the route is only 'open' for two months, as snow soon comes again. Nanga Parbat seems close to the western edge of the Deosai, but is thirty miles away. I passed within ten miles, but steep foothills hid the view; it is easier to see from eighty miles away, as in 'Nanga Parbat', an earlier photograph.

The Indus, in its gorge, flows north-west and can be seen from the north edge of the Deosai. In places the river used to be spanned by rope bridges—'spider's thread' describes them—one rope for each hand and a thicker one for the feet. I have watched shepherds carry a flock of sheep over such a bridge at Kharmang, about fifty miles upstream from Skardu—one by one, slung over their shoulders. The river below rushed down in sweeping waves at a tremendous speed.

BY THE DEOSAI

II

The skin raft provides another way of crossing these rivers. It is made of goat-skins lightly tied together by rope on a bamboo frame. The main trouble is that the skins all leak and have to be blown up every morning, which 'cannot' be done until after a leisurely breakfast; by then the sun has melted the snow and the river is like a very rough mill-race, with waves about four feet high. 'Oars' are sticks, the crew are all the men travelling on the raft—if strange to it, they are usually a pale green—and the speed about forty miles an hour. The raft may be swept a mile with the stream, when crossing a river fifty yards wide, as happens at Shigar, if snow water is really coming down. While crossing, one must forget that if the flimsy affair breaks up in the middle, the next reasonably quiet stretch of the river is at least two hundred miles away. Some of the largest glaciers in the world are only thirty miles upstream from Shigar.

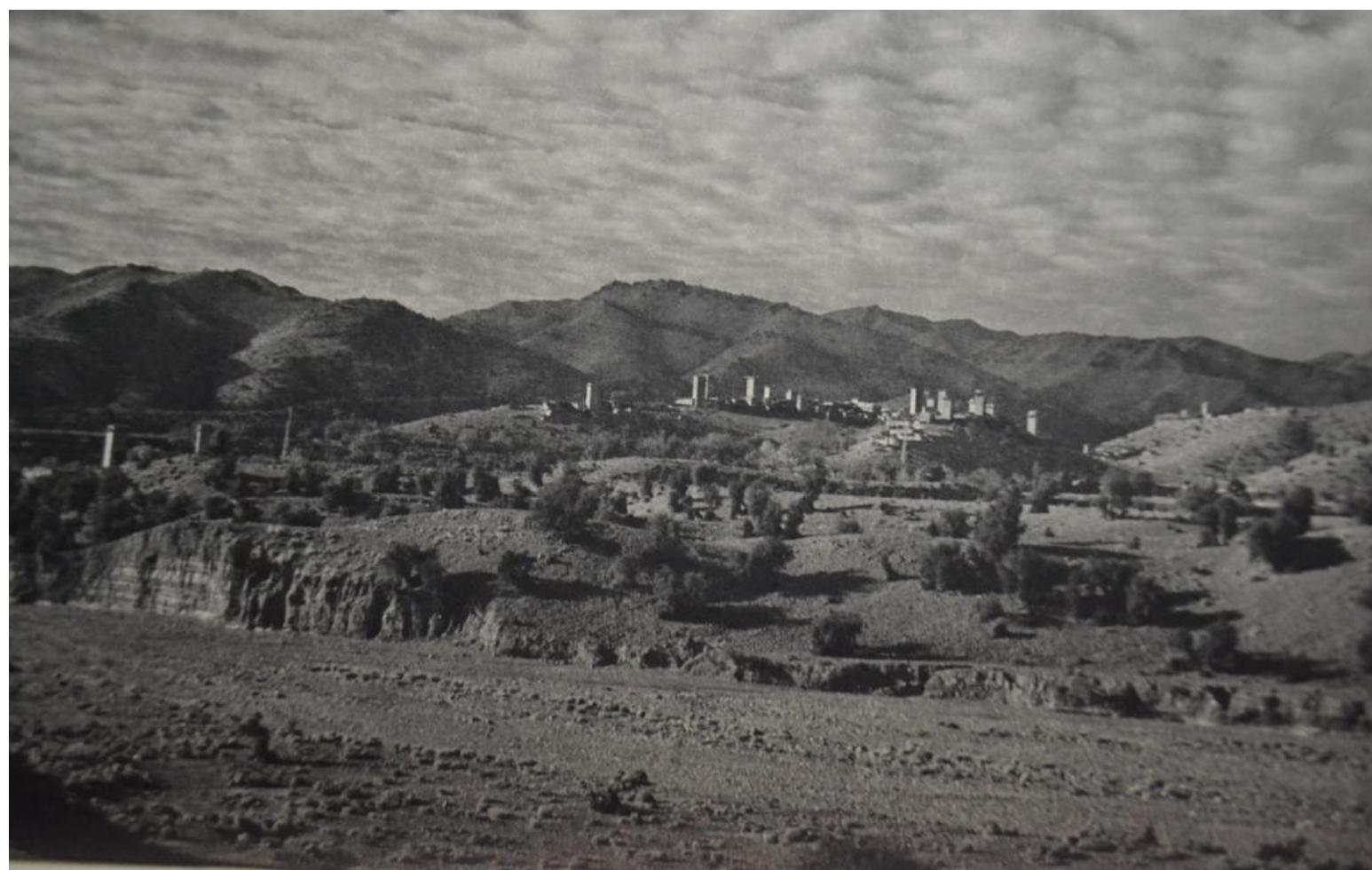
Looking in an old 'leave' diary, found after writing the earlier paragraph, it tells me that the river crossed in the skin raft was about four hundred yards wide, but probably the fifty yards I remember were in midstream, the rest being comparatively slow and shallow. Many of the hills on the far or northern side of the Zoji La pass are barren, but the diary says, of the climb to the Deosai from the Indus—'Further up the valley the flowers are very pretty, the sides of the valley looking like a rock garden—violets, forget-me-nots, wild roses, saxifrage, a sort of bluebell, dark purple flowers, crocuses, cuckoo flowers, flowering shrubs, and a sort of mauve and yellow aster, also rhubarb galore.'

'Mountains Cloudheld'

Haramukh is in the clouds. Between the mountains and the dark line of trees, the Sind river flows down to the Wular lake—to the left. The road is that from Srinagar to Ganderbal, where the Sind river leaves the hills.

The track up this river valley leads to the Zoji La pass and the dry highlands over the watershed. On the Kashmir valley side there are forests and flowers, on the other side spare grass and rocks, with apricot orchards around the river-watered villages. Then the track goes onward to the Indus, Ladakh, the Karakoram mountains, Yarkand and Central Asia.





FRONTIER TOWERS—NORTH-WEST FRONTIER, INDIA

' Village fighter's strife '

This is a large village on the Razmak road, named after the Khel or clan.

Rivals in different ends of a village occasionally start a blood feud, through some quarrel for wife or property, but usually any quarrel is with another village or tribe. Each tower is a family fortress. Over the hills to the right are Razani and Razmak—snow covered in winter. The stony river-bed in the foreground is one of the many hundred such channels, ready to take the rain running off the dry hills, as if off the roof of a house.

The river ceases to flow soon after the rain stops, or carries a trickle of water, lost in its wide pebbled course.

Chikor and see-see—or partridge—live in the hills, and black bears occasionally, but little else except the village goats out grazing in daylight. A bare land, but sometimes very beautiful.

'The river flowed blue clear'

This river flows behind the 'Frontier Fort' and takes the rain from the shadowed hills. Rain water brought the hill soil which lies on the level foreground—it came from a barren country of jagged rocks and stony gulleys. This fertile patch is irrigated by small runnels from the river and grows good crops.

Here was an Irish bridge, its causeway covered sometimes by a trickle of clear water, at other times by fifty yards of brown swirling rain water, with a miniature Niagara Falls at the lower side of the 'bridge', where there was a drop of about eight feet.

I had often crossed the river on a motor-cycle, but one day the water was a few inches deeper and flowing faster, and I found that to go on was to go down as well, until I reached the middle of the river and the edge of the fall. Some villagers working near formed a chain and helped me out. It is difficult to realise the power of such spates and of snow water, until trouble is found by stumbling or by misjudging the depth by six inches or even less. Those extra few inches mean a great increase in current speed.

Datta Khel is over the furthest hill, close to the Afghan border.





SILVER RINGS

A QUESTING man with camera came,
And Kashmir maiden fled in shame,
Her heartbeats quickening in her haste,
Her twinkling bare feet keeping pace.
Then, feeling safe from distant arms,
She, woman-like, did feel her charms
And, courage held in tight-gripped palm,
Yet outwardly with smiling calm,
She slowly, fawnlike, came again,
And gave him face and form and name.

THREE SEPOYS IN ENGLAND

THERE stood three lonely Sepoys
Who waited for their train,
My halting Urdu greeting
Brought beaming smile again.

The first one came from Dehra
And 'teen sal' had been here,
Then spoke the bearded 'Buddha'
Grey haired, from Mian Mir.

The last one came from Delhi—
The city of great kings—
They saw the old black beret
And talked of Indian things.

The guard then waved his green flag—
I got into the train,
We saw him give a final wag
And I left 'Delhi Main'.

A DAUGHTER

SUNSHINE and showers,
Tantrums and glowers,
Blue eyes that love,
Hair soft as a dove—
Grey eyes that hate,
Tears flowing in spate.

Skiing and riding,
Sulking and crying—
Gold hair that shines ;
Hiccups and whines—
Running and jumping,
Lagging and grumping.

Heartbroken, heartbreaking,
Soon childhood forsaking ;
When happy ways part,
She will stay in my heart.

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

I HAVE cigarettes for you, Daddy,
But they got bent in the car,
Shall I take the paper off them, Daddy,
And fill your tobacco jar ?

A SON

CHEERFUL young chatter—
Thoughts that do matter.
Stupid blank mind
With brilliant thoughts lined.

The lazy young devil
Can jump to high level,
And sits a big horse
As a matter of course.

Yet give him a sum,
He's unutterably dumb,
But if he just wishes
No right answer misses.

Thoughts far away
Now will earn him no pay,
But these seeds just born
May yield finest corn.

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

I HAVE a drawing for you, Daddy,
They're seaplanes in the war.
You can see the floats on them, Daddy,
And the ships they're going for.

RONNIE—A LETTER TO A YOUNG DAUGHTER

Now Ronnie was a frisky mare
Who galloped very like a hare.
Both Pat and John she liked to try
To see if they could stand a shy.

A jump was just what Ronnie liked,
To make quite sure John's seat was right,
And Pat she too did often test
To see which of the three was best.

But Ronnie did not like a trap,
She took poor Mummy off the map,
And when at last she stopped to rest
The trap was of that three the best.

The trap was kicked and bounced and swayed,
And Pat and Mummy were afraid.
The mushrooms in the basket got
A shake which nearly lost the lot.

Next day the trap was quite repaired
And Ronnie looked a quiet mare,
Until she home did want to go
And Mummy failed to keep her slow.

Past tank she went just like a swallow
While Daddy and the guard did follow.
They caught her by Miss Cross's house,
By then she was just like a mouse.

She wanted just to graze at home
And round Miss Cross's fields to roam,
With Easter close to sympathise
About that trap and suchlike ties.

To Smokey then the news she broke
And both thought it a lovely joke,
But April now takes Ronnie's place,
And Mummy leads no chariot race.

THE STOCKING

THEY seem mercenary children
With disillusioned minds,
Or they may hide illusions
Of a disillusioned kind.

They hang their Christmas stocking
With Christmas Eve remark,
'I wonder what he'll put in,
We'll hear him in the dark.'

They know that Father Christmas
Is just Daddy's alibi,
And that room need have no chimney
And they know the reason why.

But still their hearts go leaping
On thrilling Christmas morn,
And stocking's old illusion keep
For next year's Christmas Dawn.

WARTIME JOURNEY

'You change when you get out,'
This from a trousered dame,
Mere males she now can flout—
She works hard just the same.

'That was your train—it's gone'—
It passed out into night,
The train next in was 'wrong',
When really it was right.

How can the myriad lights
Guide in the deepest dark?
They must have more than sight
Who guide from journey's start.

What is this station dim,
Is this the place I change?
Yes, but the story's grim—
Long hours I platform range.

I watch the shining line,
The night is nearly spent,
The platform is all mine—
The last train earlier went.

This ends the traveller's day,
A tale of halting flight—
On distant permanent way,
Steel wheels greet dawning light.

*Written on the journey, as an aid to patience when patience was
sorely in need of aid, at dim blue-lit intervals between 11 p.m.
and dawn.*

MECHKA

FROM sun-scorched rocky mound, through sun-dried air,
There could be seen, above the shrivelled trees,
A distant island, high ridged in brown-leaved seas—
Green refuge from the heat and dazzling glare.

No haunt of chital this, or buffalo herd
Who still, in shrunken pools, find muddy wallow,
But cool green glade, around a clear-pooled hollow—
Hill shadowed by still wings of soaring bird.

This jungle crest hears whisper from the plain
Of breeze in branches—grey langur's chatter,
A calling sambhur's bell, a stone fall's clatter,
A tiger's roar by night—a cry of pain.

Dark bison climb its lower slopes and stare,
Watching through leafy branches, river-bed—
While jungle cock crows loud with upraised head,
And echoes call from rocks—the red dog's lair.

While grubbing, grumbling bear moves slowly by
To ant hill or the mohwa tree's sweet flower,
And spotted chital stand in leafy bower—
Sun crowns the sleeping trees, as pea fowl cry.

Then barasingh call out from swampy haunt—
Fine antlers move above the reedy grass—
Their movement stills, when clumsy nilgai pass;
A fire-burnt line of trees stands starkly gaunt.

In May dark clouds will give the jungle life,
Through dripping leaves and rivers running free,
Then Mechka will lose pride in green-leaved tree—
Next year to watch again the molten strife.

RED SEA SUNRISE

SEA of deepest sapphire—
 Sky of every hue,
From amethyst to opal—
 Ruby, turquoise blue.

The clouds that gave the sunrise
 This lovely waking dream,
Fled from the sky, in sad surprise,
 As burning sun was seen.

The sun rose first as oval,
 Then changed to molten pear
And, quickly rising, rounded,
 Revealed in brazen glare.

But later, nearing Suez,
 Light clouds came back again
And, in a calm and quiet sea,
 Lay miraged in her frame.





THE RED SEA

*'And in a calm and quiet sea
Lay miraged in her frame'*

If at sea, wake just before dawn and watch until the sun can be fully seen. The sunrise may be wonderful on some mornings, amazing on others—as when the sun rose as oval and changed to pear, and looked as if it were being held back by the sea.

The rest of the day is a story of head-wind or following wind, sand from the far desert sandstorm, flying fish forming watery fans as they dart clear from the ship, and porpoises playing in the bow wave.

In May, sitting next to the Chief Engineer of a 4000-ton ship, three of us had a bet with the 'Chief' that we would stoke his boilers and trim his bunkers for two shifts. The bet was 'on' and we relieved the ship's trimmers on one day and the stokers on the next. Trimming in the old-fashioned, low-roofed bunkers was the worst job by far. Baths had a black water-line for days afterwards, but the ship kept up its steam and we won our bet.

It can be cool and even cold—a following wind down the sea and the ship sweltering, then a change of course to Port Sudan, with the wind blowing right through the ship and overcoats at night. I have often wanted to visit one of the small lighthouses in the Red Sea, on isolated rocks, miles from shore. Their keepers must be philosophical men.

FROM AN OLD 'LEAVE' DIARY—'MECHKA'

Looking through an old diary, consisting of letters written home from India, I see that at 23 one is often too intent on a self-centred aim, such as the shooting of a tiger or the collection of an ibex with immense horns. Aims such as getting to know and helping the local people were only incidental, although I gained quite a reputation as a 'doctor'—I hope my patients recovered. Photography soon replaced shooting—much to the disappointment of many of the villagers. Shooting was necessary sometimes to get rid of a cattle killer or to help the village folk in getting meat—the older stags are usually of no benefit to a herd. Taking a photograph of a wild buffalo bull at forty yards, with his sweeping horns and his head well up, can be quite exciting. An estimate of how long it would take to get rid of the camera and climb one of the very slim sal trees was always necessary—especially when the rest of the herd were behind the bull. . . . This herd had killed two men a few days before, as they were driving their bullock wagon over a river-bed crossing. About a week later, in the middle of the night, my bearer woke me up with a shake and 'Bund beiss hi, sahib'—'The buffalo are here.' Crashings and snorts came from everywhere, and pyjamas and a rifle at the tent entrance seemed a poor protection. The rest of the camp had climbed up trees. Soon the jungle was silent again.

Near Sihawa, in a cultivated area surrounded by jungle, a man-eating panther had killed about twenty people—mostly old women fetching firewood and water. I decided to have a try for it, and waited at night in a six-foot-high tree-stump on the edge of a pond, with an unfortunate goat as a decoy. About midnight something moved on my left, and as I could not be seen from there, I turned to face that way. At once there was a panther call from some reeds in front, across the pond, and the calling went on for about five minutes. My movement had obviously been seen from the front, but suddenly, from the left, a dark shape sprang towards the goat, and I fired. The calling continued for about half an hour and gradually faded into the distance. Later I stepped down from the stump and found a nearly full-grown panther. Apparently the mother was training the cub, and tried to warn it as soon as she saw me move, but the cub would not listen. As a man-eating mother will often train a cub to overcome the natural fear of man and to hunt such easy game, the shooting may have got rid of a man-eater.

I arrived at the village as the sun was rising and found a rope archway and the villagers, with quickly made flower garlands, turned out in force to greet me. One of the men, who came to the pond at daybreak, had gone back with the news. Afterwards the village police inspector gave me a meal—the diary says '—eggs and plenty of bread and butter and lots of goodwill, such as refilling my cup when I had drunk only half'.

The monsoon, indicated in the last verse of 'Mechka', came early and caught me over one hundred miles from the nearest town, with a badly damaged leg from a fall on some rocks. There were two rivers to cross, so I bound a sheet round my leg and set off in the evening, in pouring rain, for a road only guessed at from a small map. I had a Triumph motor-cycle, which had never let me down, and this made me feel confident of getting back. Incidentally the machine had been left out in the jungle a few times and one morning it had tiger tracks all round. On another occasion, at night, I found a village deserted, as the approaching headlamp, combined with the 'chug-chug', had frightened all the inhabitants away.

The path, very slippery, went along the river-bed, in the foreground of the photograph of 'Mechka'. I got to the track or road by dark, and soon afterwards found a herd of wild buffalo on the road, by a watery hollow. The road too was very slippery—just a mud surface—and I had already fallen off once or twice. The only thing was to go right through the herd, trusting that noise and the light would frighten them away and hoping to avoid a fall in the mud—my weapon was a .45 revolver. They let me through. Later on, it took five hours to go fifteen miles, as the road had been ploughed across when the 'rains' started and, all around, the reflection of sheets of water could be seen in the starlight. I had to take off the front mudguard and tie it on the carrier as the mud jammed the wheel—by this time my leg was quite numb and I was falling off regularly.

Rajim was reached by 1.30 a.m. and, after waking some people up, they said the river was impassable. Luckily one bullock-wagon driver agreed to take me over the mile of sand-banks and partially flooded river—the Mahanadi—and I then decided to have my tea, of pineapple chunks. I could not see from the back of the *garry*, but could feel the wheels leaving the ground and the water coming over the floor, and hear the shouts of the driver, as the motor-cycle and I were thrown from side to side. The railway station was reached by four in the morning, and I stayed in bed at the rest house for two days, dressing my battered leg.

A day later, while in the train on the way back from 'leave', I had my first attack of malaria, which must have come from a mosquito bite a few days before at Mechka. It was lucky that I made the sudden decision as soon as the real monsoon came, to leave Mechka the same evening, although it took me half an hour, and much effort, to move my leg from the bed to the ground—the damage had been done when running away from a bear. If I had stayed, bands of anopheles mosquitoes, fever for the first time, and the leg, with only myself as a nurse, and 150 miles over flooded rivers and jungle tracks to the nearest doctor, would have been difficult to deal with.

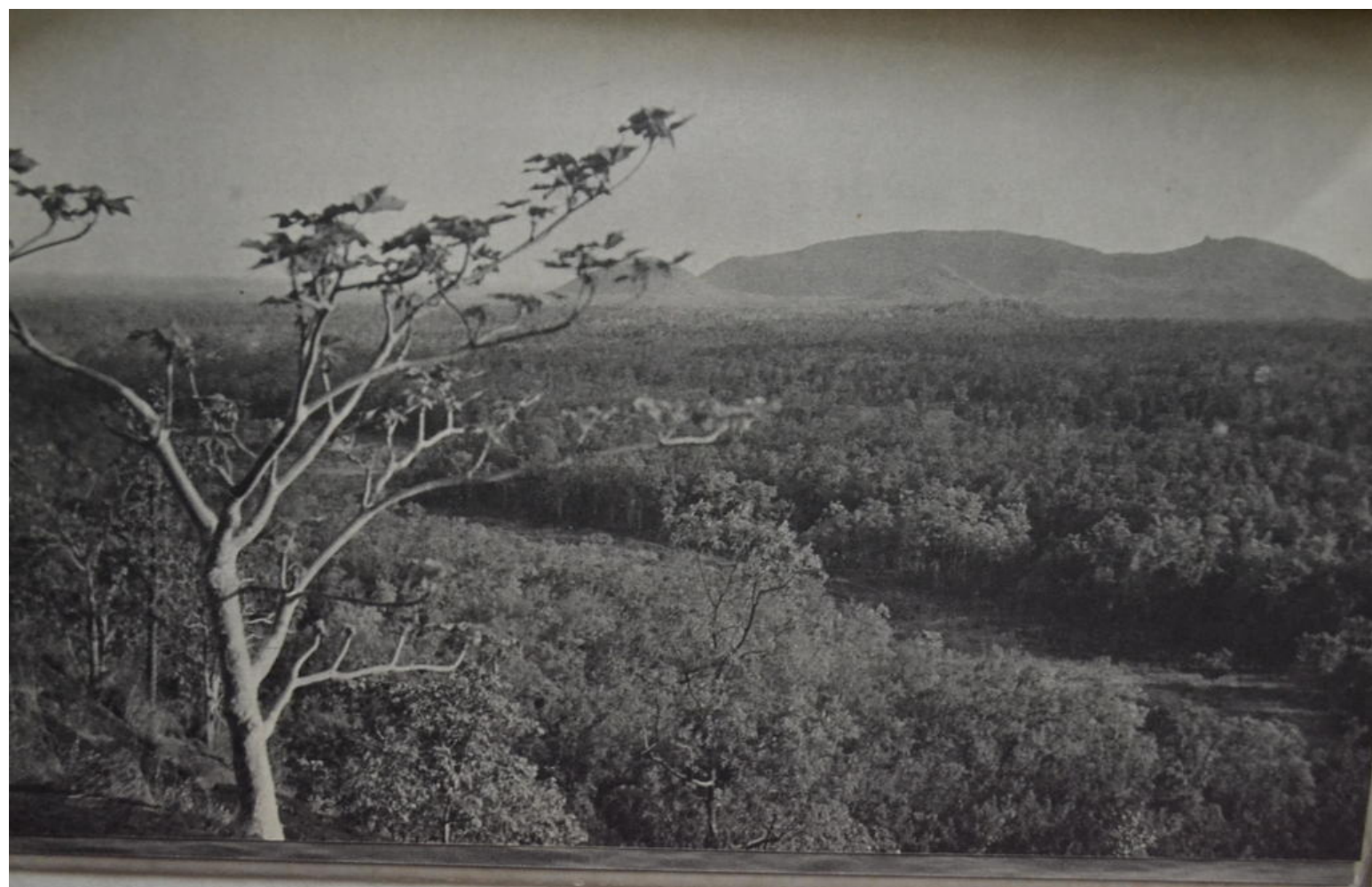
Mechka can be seen in the distance and the 'clear pooled hollow' is in the dip between the two high points. The camp, where the wild buffalo came, is about half a mile from the river-bed, towards Mechka. The river-bed itself was a book of jungle movements—mostly written at night. Along it were tiger, panther and buffalo tracks, and across it, tracks of sambhur, chital, barasingh, bear and bison—animals less fond of the open river-bed—and many signs of smaller animals and birds.

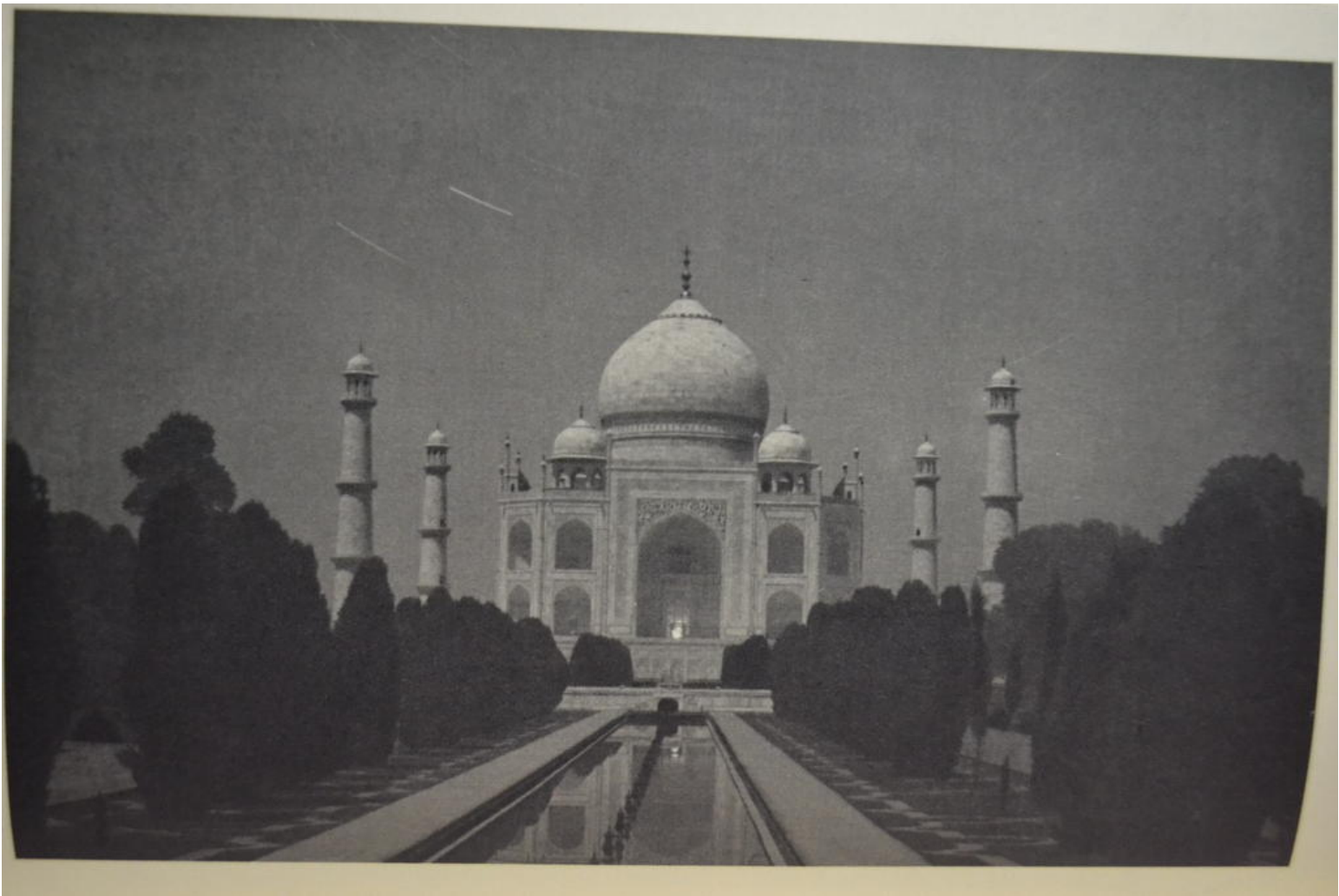
On some dawns of rainy promise, at a given signal, millions of cicadas gave their salute to the day, a shrill and deafening call; the first time I heard it, above and around me, I could not realise what it was. Behind the mound, from which the photograph was taken, and about a mile up the river-bed, were grass huts, home of jungle folk living entirely on the jungle. Their weapons, for obtaining food and protection, were bows and arrows—the bows covered with snake and lizard skins, beautifully made and usually family heirlooms—the arrows heavily barbed. Monkeys and smaller or larger game, and forest berries, were their food.

One evening here, at the end of the first shower before the monsoon, I was walking in the jungle, by the far side of the river-bed, when I realised that a wild buffalo was watching me from the other bank. The evening light was shining against his wet flanks, and, with his wide-set horns and massive body, he made a vivid and remembered scene—a grey glistening shape, ringed by silver mist and rain-freshened trees.

Among the many old notes is one that shows the bravery of villagers. The bullocks of a *bile garry* were attacked by a tiger, on the far side of Mechka. The driver at once tried to beat off the tiger with a stick, until it seized his hands. This was not bravery without reason, as probably the two bullocks and the cart represented nearly all the man's possessions. It is very unlikely that the man on his own would have been attacked, unless the tiger were unable to kill other game, due to old age or some disability, as these are the usual causes of a tiger turning man-eater.

To develop this photograph—over 20 years old—water was first 'dug' from the dry river bed and put in chatties—porous earthenware jars—to cool. That used in the 'daylight' developing tank was then strained, and formalin hardening solution added to prevent the film coating from melting and peeling off. The process took place by lantern light inside my small tent—in the camp which the wild buffalo visited at night, and with animals often calling from the nearby jungle. It was done between 1 and 3 a.m. in the coolest part of the night.





THE MOONLIT TOMB

BESIDE the Jumna river stands
The fairest tomb formed by man's hand,
And stars in courses overhead
Form heavenly halo round the dead.

The flame lights up, as Jumna sighs,
Her spirit there, and quiet she lies
While shadowy figures move around—
They feel that love lives in this ground.

II

THE DANCER

LEND me your heart, young red-lipped budding dawn,
If it were only while your rays strike cool;
Give me that time before full day is born,
Fleeting as clouds, deep in a mountain pool.
Take from me all that ever was your need
And, when you dance with iridescent form,
Save one heart-beat as you, from graceful speed,
Pause, while your body rests in throbbing storm.
See then life's lovely rainbow at our hand—
But you danced up its arched and shining bridge
And watched, through gold and blue and green, the land
Stretched out beneath your eyes—bare love-swept ridge.
Still down there stood a man and still he stands,
Held fast to rainbow's arch by dancing strands.

III

MOONLIGHT

HER body was of warm moonlight, and stood
In living shade, as soft breast rose and fell—
A gently breathing form—life's hills and wood,
With fair yet misty glades and deepest well.
But slowly, as if dawn were waking night,
She moved and sighed and white teeth gleamed a smile,
Then, turning quietly, walked right out of sight
And all around seemed empty—full of guile.
With morning, came fresh colour and quick life,
The new day showed that shadows were not black,
That years will change moondream to daylight wife
Whose mind and self hold him from looking back,
As years go on our hearts grow old—some wise,
But wisdom does not mean that moonlight dies.

IV

SPRING SUN

How warm the feel of spring's first sunny day,
 Wintry hearts cheer, as its beams strike kindly,
 Pale petals greet first scintillating ray,
 Fast speeds the blood—black winter is behind thee.
 What augurs spring—can daffodil foretell
 The course of life right onward into March?
 Each sunny day may lead straight into hell,
 But heaven, through hell, is seen where two ways branch.
 Heed springtime's call to work and death and life
 And help the world along the straighter road,
 Leave winter's fog of hate and lust and strife—
 Soon summer comes to lift the heavy load.
 The spring sun burns, let it set light to life,
 First cleansed by fire, then shaped by Wisdom's knife.

V

THE TIDE

SEA's hand led on by circling moon and earth
 Sweeps daily over salty no man's land;
 The moon tires not of cruising round world's girth,
 Nor tides of washing rock, and weed, and sand.
 With flow, comes life—sea-life content to stay
 Hid in the watery sand, or rocky pool.
 The crafty prawn, tide-spied on ravined way,
 Floats through the sea-bed trees, where lobsters rule—
 Her sword outstretched, prepared for fishy fray,
 Eyes seeing all, body translucent green,
 Borne with the swell, as clinging seaweeds sway.
 By sea-flower's coral tendrils, limpets teem—
 Both watch the moon's procession—do they know
 Why all these scaly skinned crustaceans ebb and flow?

A GREY-HAIRED man sailed out again—
 The world of youth knew him by fame—
 To see once more the Ganges plain
 And hear the Kadir's magic name.

His name still lives with those who cared,
 Although he scouts no more, he leaves
 These two plain words—just 'Be Prepared',
 A call for many brave young deeds.

When scouts of friendly races meet,
 To lay their homage at his feet,
 His spirit will be there to greet
 All scouts—so leave an empty seat.

TENNIS

HER eyes were made to see the ball
 In all its arc of flight,
 Her legs were made to get the ball,
 Her chin showed grit and fight.

Her hands were made to guide the ball
 Through all its swiftest course
 By wrist and arm and shoulder—all
 Combined in body's force.

Her lips were parted in a smile—
 She sped about the court—
 And played it as a game, the while
 The others scratched and fought.

BY DELHI FORT

Seven pictures

THE fisherman threw wide no net—
Coned basket gave him fish—
In mud, the mud fish were deep set,
To stay in mud—their wish.

To plait her hair in twisted strands,
To give her girlish charm,
The mother worked with easy hands,
The plait held in her palm.

The dancing-girl stood by the fort,
Just 'Bijlee' was her name;
Young eyes watched life—by hardship taught—
And folk from Delhi came.

The whistler blew to sell his wares—
The whistles he had made,
The krait and cobra listened in
From moat, where they were laid.

The garry rumbles on its wheels,
The bullocks swing and swerve—
Such wheels have turned a thousand years,
By brown hand, hewn and curved.

This mosque calls Moslems round to pray
On stone-paved fountained floor—
Outside its walls are sellers' booths,
And some of Delhi's poor.

The palace white as clouds above
Rests lightly on the earth,
For Shahjehan—of greatest love,
Gave to this palace—birth.

BEECH TREES IN WAR

TALL beeches stand along the wall,
But axes chip and beeches fall,
Replaced by grass and running hare—
Soon ghosts of trees will stand up there.
As light is born they must be seen
With shades of things that might have been,
For ghosts of trees are misty things
And fade with thoughts on soundless wings.

Blazed, ready for the woodman's will,
More beeches live on sister hill—
A quiet shelter and a home
Where brambles lie in beech fed loam.
There are firs and berried holly,
Chestnut trees and fern edged quarry,
But all these things are only frames,
As hedges are to country lanes.

Soon beech nuts, buried in the ground,
Will form young trees on open down,
These growing tall, while axes rest—
Will harbour rooks and their high nest.
The old trees do not die in peace,
But gladly will their sap release
And feel that life is not in vain
If wooden planks are England's gain.

BELOW PIR GUHL

As Haramukh reigns in softer land,
So Pir Guhl, over rocks and sand,
Keeps touch with Afghan peak and pine
And Indus river's distant shine.

Fir trees, to her snow-crowned peak,
Reach up and, from her rain-clouds, seek
Water to make their life-blood leap
And resin in their tree limbs keep.

Snowbeams from her sun-tipped shoulder,
Give raiding party, growing bolder,
Homeward light to village tower—
Their women come to praise man's power.

Strongholds made of stone and mud,
Each fortress tower held with man's blood,
Give to the village, a loop-holed keep—
From blood feud, shelter while they sleep.

Powindah convoys passing, try
By toll to tribes, their lives to buy—
Free Persian rugs, to frontier Khan,
Pass goods for sale in Hindustan.

The road leads down the Takki Zam—
Where rifle shot can shatter calm—
To plains and Dehra Ismael Khan,
And rest—away from bullet's harm.

Men must be strong, and bridges too,
As Shahur Tangi's floods rush through—
Eighty-foot spate of rocks and water—
And back goes bridge to stone and mortar.

A SHIP AT DAWN

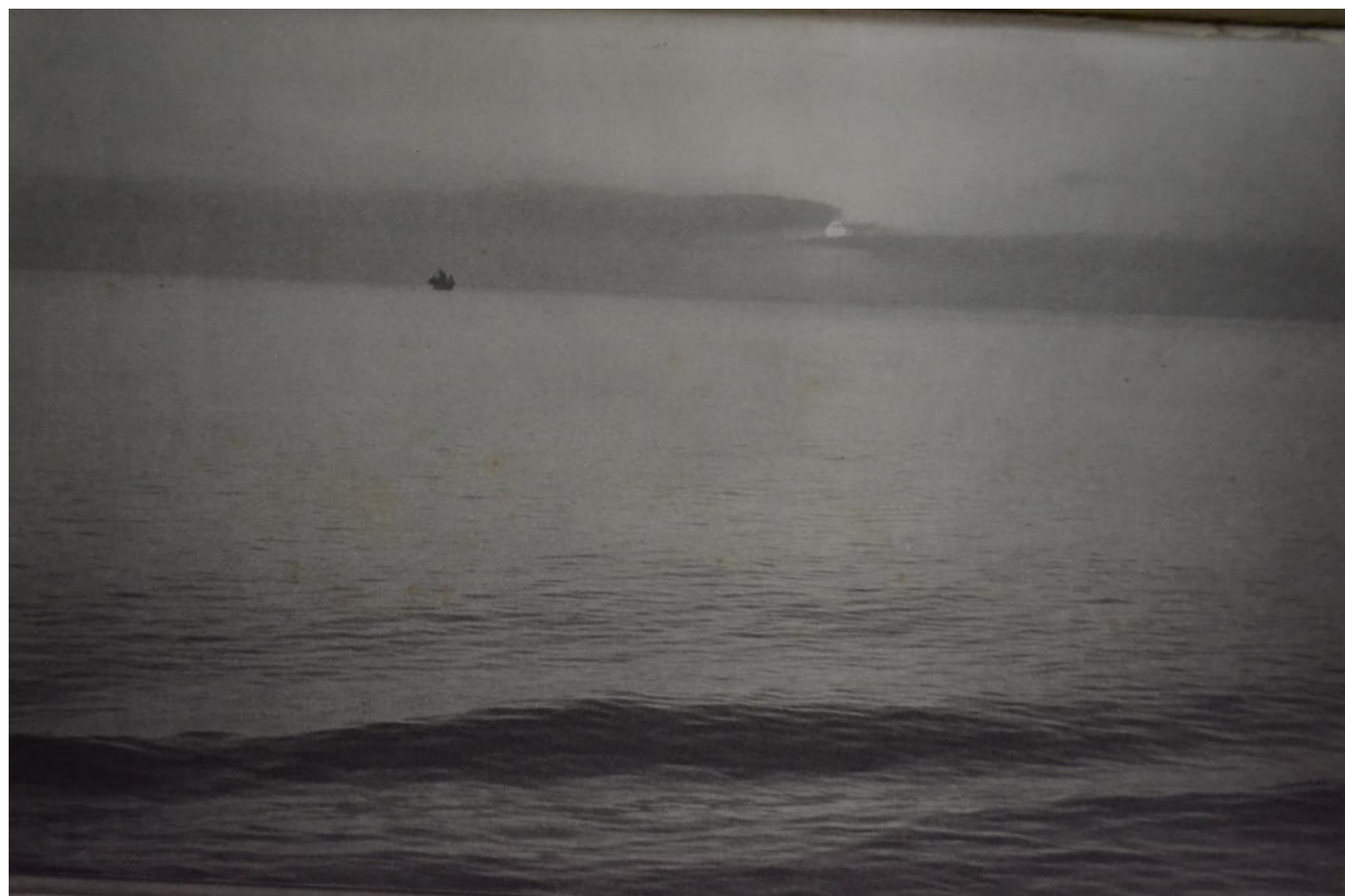
To Malta, slowly sails this ship
Through many years of pain,
Straight onward through the world's tide-rip,
Her cargo—world's great gain.

She passed by here—the sunrise red—
In nineteen thirty-eight,
At dawn of times when kindness shed
Her tears for Malta's fate.

The ship may now have found a berth
By some quiet harbour's shore,
Or it may lie among the surf,
Or rest on deep sea-floor.

Yet she will sail and carry peace
As guns' last salvos roar,
And quietly—as battles cease
Pass through Valetta's door.

This misty ship, where sea meets sky,
Sails on with steady keel,
Her fighting spirit will not die
In hurricanes of steel.





THE CASTLE

DEEP study of a mobile toe,
May tell him all he wants to know,
Of how a king his castle saves
From hundreds of attacking waves.

She lightly would the site abandon
And choose another one at random—
These walls, to her, are nothing more
Than day-dreams built upon a shore.

'Our children's joy in happy lands'—The river with the swans.

The river soon loses itself, below cliffs which can see the moorland—the river's source—distant blue, above the river-side woods.

The cottage is *'John King's'*. I can just remember the old fisherman, sitting on the plank seat, below the slate-covered sides of his home—his clay pipe in his mouth, his chin fringed with a scraggy beard, a sea-tinted black hat shading his eyes from the afternoon sun.

Near the swans, little bays in the sand guide silver lance, as they streak through the water. Sometimes, by their speed, they find themselves on the dry shore and flicker into mid-air—energy incarnate—until they reach the water or wet sand again, when they are gone, as if they were never there.

In the distance is the heronry; seldom can one look along the river without seeing a long-legged statue in the shallows. Underwater, dabs rush along from one sandy patch, over gravel, to hide in another, their flat bodies stirring up a wake of sand as they pass, to bury again all but one watching eye in the sand.

MECHKA III—'SPECIAL TRAIN'

This is a diary note, of train timing on a very small line—normally the main-line trains were good.

Stationmaster :—'I can send a *'special'* to D. tonight if you like.'

Me :—'Thanks very much indeed.'

S.M. :—'What time would you like to start?'

Me :—'Any time you like.'

S.M. :—'But say what time you would really like to start.'

Me :—'Well, say half-past seven or eight.'

S.M. :—'All right, I will have it ready at 7.45.'

Me :—'I hope that I am not upsetting any of your arrangements, I will be there at about half-past seven.'

S.M. :—'Right!'

Actual time-table :—I arrive at 7.30—guard arrives 8.0 p.m.—engine arrives 8.45—stationmaster arrives 9.30—guard's supper arrives 10.15—engine driver returns from his supper 10.30—start made 11.0 p.m., in a 1st Class carriage with no windows and sacking sides—arrive at destination, 40 miles away, at 4 a.m.

MECHKA IV—TIGER BY NIGHT

One night, when just about to go to sleep near a path through the jungle, and accompanied only by a local villager, I heard a tiger roaring in the distance; soon the roaring showed that the tiger was coming down the path. It was quite dark, but somehow one felt that the jungle folk, when left alone, were friendly—except for buffalo and bear—so I just sat up, on the ground, with a rifle across my knees.

As the tiger came near, he stopped roaring and the jungle was completely and uncannily silent. Then, about ten yards away, I heard his unmistakable heavy breathing, and a dry leaf break. By the occasional crackle of a dead leaf and by the breathing, we could hear the tiger circling around us, and we also turned round on the ground, as listening to the breathing behind us was a bit unpleasant—it was all right in front. This lasted for about ten minutes.

Then silently he went and the roaring started again about half a mile along the path. At midnight we heard him return and expected another visit. This time the roaring stopped about a hundred yards away and, after a 'long' minute or two, we heard the roaring away on the other side, which was a relief, as the novelty had worn off.

Early the next morning, I heard some animals moving near a clear pool in dense sal forest. I slowly sat down on the ground. Presently five sambhur passed, listening always with their large ears and nibbling the young tree shoots. I was in full view but sat quite still and they came within a few yards. As soon as they were hidden again by the trees, I stood up and then saw the hindquarters of a large tiger disappearing into long grass about twenty yards away. If I had remained still, it is possible that I would have seen the stalk and the kill—the tiger was probably the visitor of the night before.

B. P.

This shows the line of elephants in a heat at the 'Kadir Cup'. The four riders on the right are waiting for a pig to break away—that particular year they speared a panther.

The Chief Scout—seated in the howdah on the first elephant—in his younger days rode in the Kadir, and returned in 1937. The Scout jamboree at Delhi about this time, was most interesting. I had an invitation to visit the Naga Hills, from Solen Naga—boy scout, who was at the Delhi Camp with hundreds of others, some from Gilgit, Ceylon, Manipur and every part of the country.

The Naga scouts performed a lively war dance in 'head hunting' dress—ivory armlets, human hair tufts, spears and shields. The Manipur dancing was extremely graceful, particularly the arm and finger movements. Their dress was of gold and silver embroidery and tinsel—flashing with light—with similar head, arm, hand and feet ornaments.





THE FISHERMAN

'In mud the mud fish were deep set'

The fish are frightened out of the mud and into the basket, and caught by hand through the hole in the top. This photograph was taken beside the Grand Trunk Road, in the middle of its 1500 miles course through the Ganges plain and up to Peshawar.

Fish, except snow trout, have always eluded me in India, and there seemed so much else to do on a 'leave'. Often there is the knowledge that there are reputed catchable fish of from 50 to 150 pounds in a river or lake. Sometimes the thrill comes from a fish, but more thrills come from underwater rocky ledges—until one finds that every time the 'huge fish' 'takes' the spinning bait, it is at the same spot. A large mahseer gave me an exciting ten minutes near Dehra Dun—it was worth the three days of hard fishing.

Brown or rainbow trout, or possibly both, thrive in glacier-fed Gangabal, below Haramukh, at a height of twelve thousand feet—I did not see snow trout there. The ripples of a 'rise' can just be seen in the glacier reflections.

MECHKA V—A TEST OF TRUTH

Under a village mango tree—shade provider throughout the year—there was an old wooden stake, about four feet high. At the top projected vertically a miniature sword, a spike roughly eight inches long, with a small crosspiece, just above where the spike entered the wood.

If there were quarrels or arguments and a decision were required, the folk concerned could in turn rest their chins—just behind the bone—on the spike and the 'judge' would press on the top of the litigant's head. When the crosspiece was reached by the chin, the test was nearly complete, as whoever recovered, he or she was telling the truth. If neither did so, both were lying. I understand that very few arguments were not settled before the truth tester had to be called in. If one person agreed to undergo the test and the other did not, it was considered that the unwilling one had doubts as to his or her recovery after the test, and was therefore lying, and the case was settled without the need of the full procedure.

THE PLAIT

'To plait her hair in twisted strands'

Beside some outspanned bullock wagons, hedged in with reed mats, this hairdressing was being deftly carried out. I asked if a photograph—*taswir*—could be taken. The request was sufficient to collect fifty potential photographic subjects, and only with firm persuasion was a result obtained before it became too dark. The photograph originally included about ten grinning faces where it 'fades' away on the left, the shade from the unwanted subjects causing it to be still more underexposed. Anyone who has taken photographs where a camera is a strange machine will know of this trouble.

Three days later I gave them some prints, which, in their eagerness to see themselves or their friends, were immediately torn to pieces—five or six grasping hands to each print. They learnt a lesson, as the replacements were carefully treated.

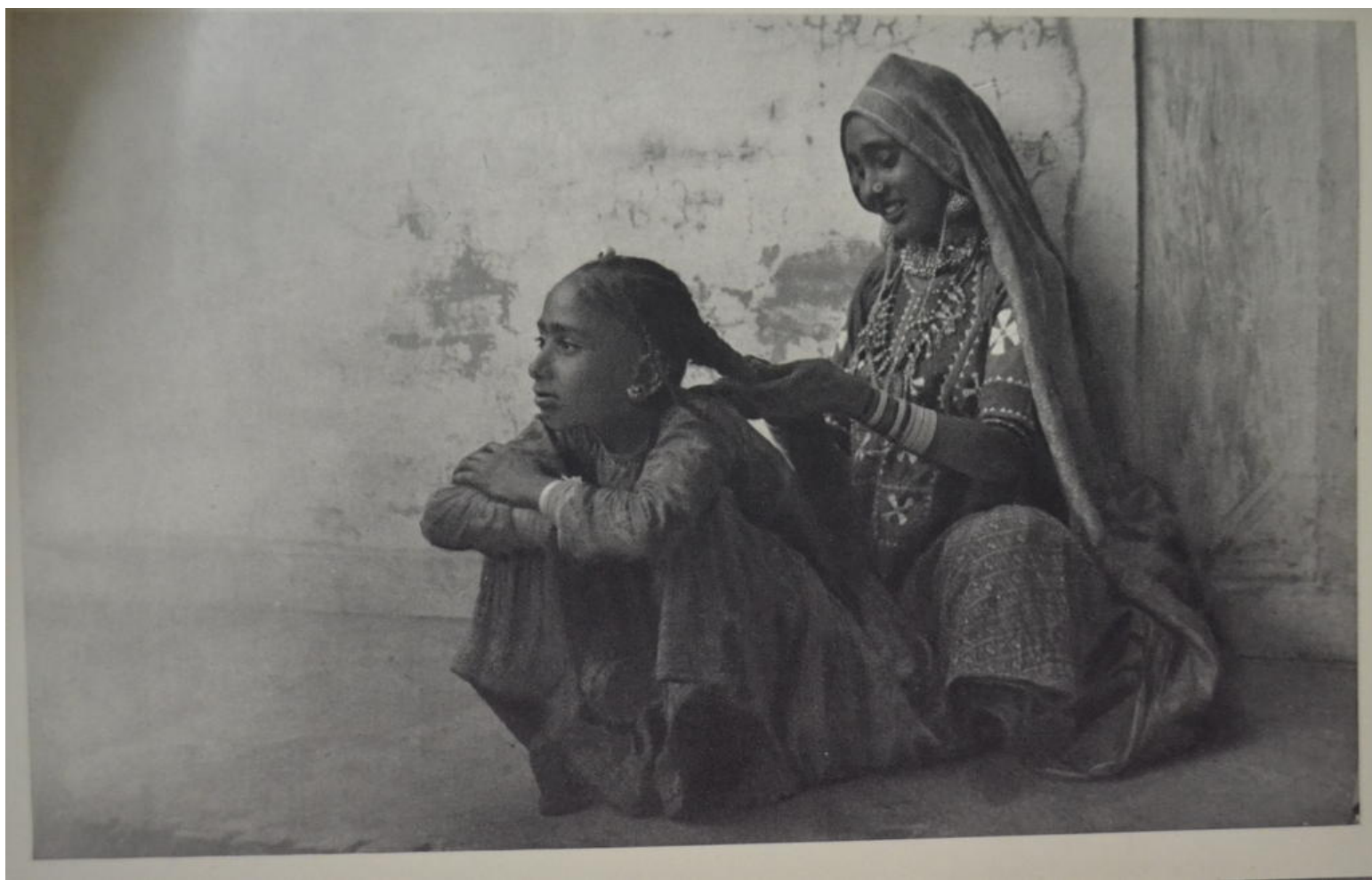
These were Loharis—workers in iron, who travel about from village to village, repairing here and making there, equivalent really to a caravan of travelling tinkers.

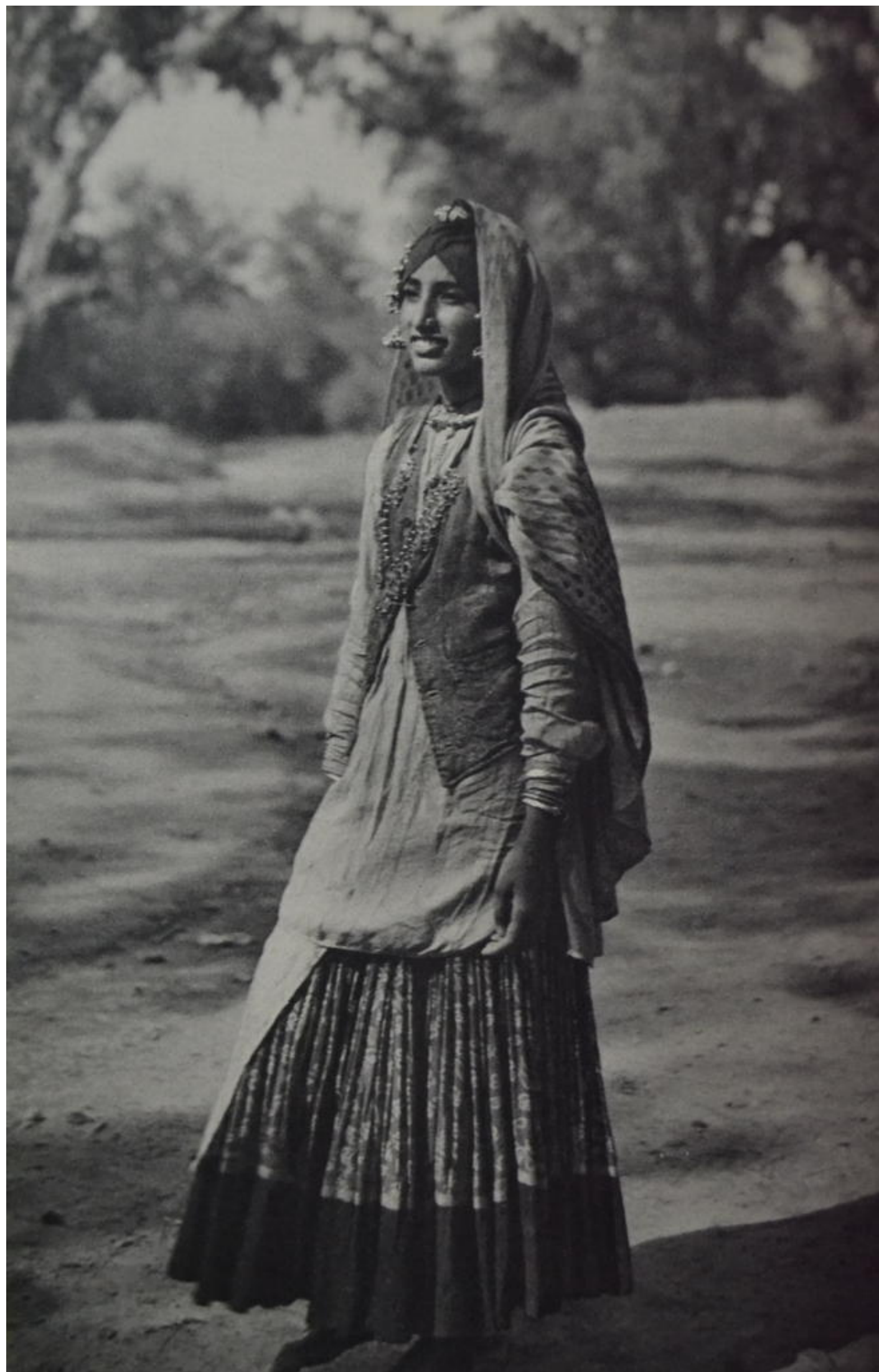
At dusk a party of five girls from this camp passed, singing as they strode gracefully along to fetch water from the nearest well, on their heads the usual brass or red earthenware 'chatties' or jars. They walked with wide skirts swinging and silver anklets beating time with their song.

BIJLEE

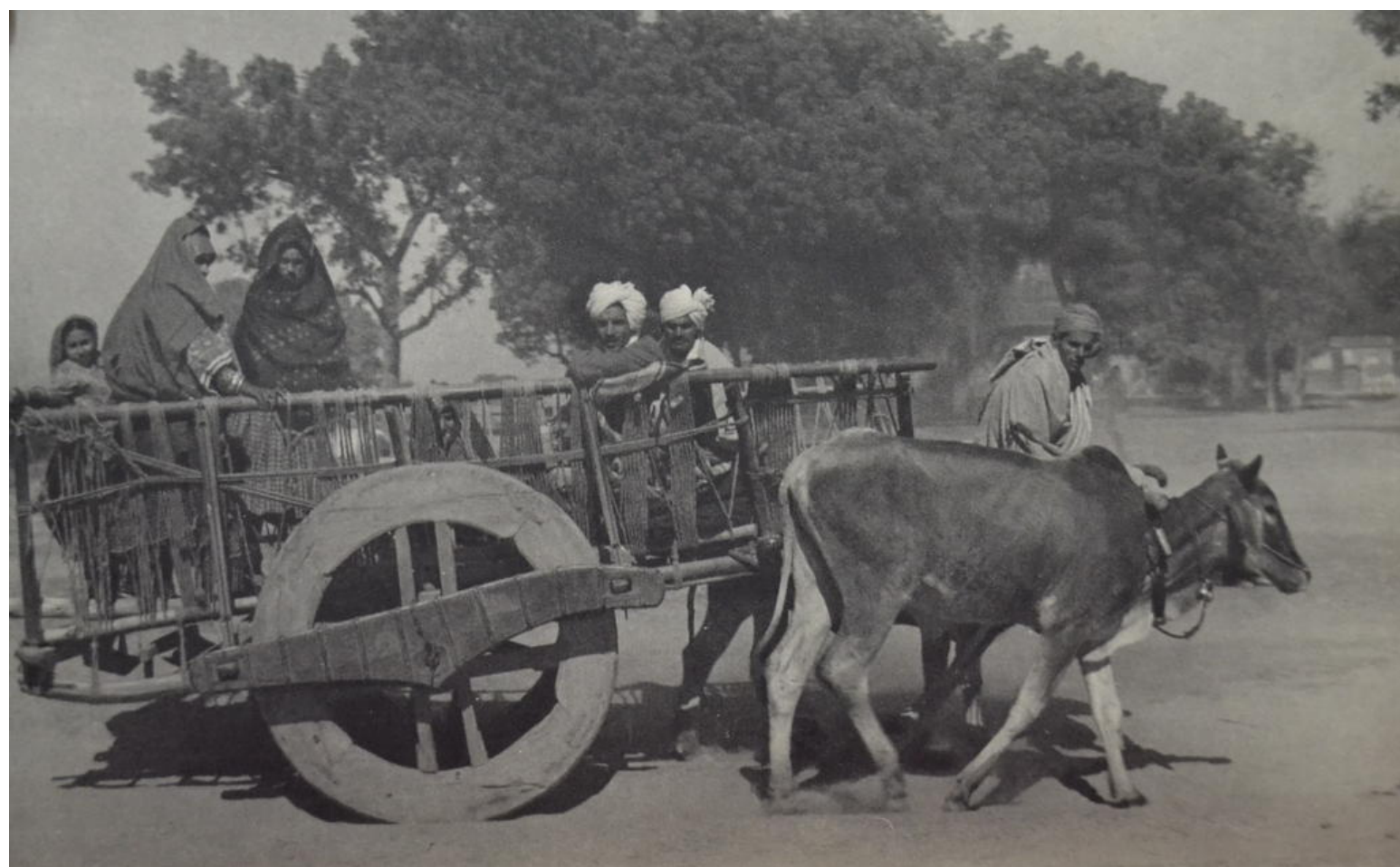
'Young eyes watched life—by hardship taught—'

Bijlee stands with 'The Whistler' on the next page, her name means lightning, or electric light, and is probably a stage name. Her age is about fifteen. She was the most youthful and unaffected of a troupe which used to sing and dance outside Delhi Fort. The others were quite interesting types, older, with more silver ornaments and smarter dresses. The 'band' was an old man—with a large walrus moustache and a drum. The songs were uniform in note and the dancing was different from the Bali type, hardly more than the light stamping of feet without many head or arm movements—the delight of Balinese dancing. The skirt, when drying on a village roof, forms a complete circle, with a hole in the centre for the waist.









THE BULLOCK WAGON

'Such wheels have turned a thousand years'

This is in Rajputana, where the men are from fighting stock and sturdy women stride along, to help on the land or fetch water, with their pleated skirts swinging, and sometimes carrying a six or seven-year-old child in a basket, balanced on the head.

Houses often have coloured drawings on their white walls, some showing the skill of traditional Rajput art; farms are well tended and, given a good year, that is good rain, the impression is of happiness everywhere.

THE WHISTLER

'The whistler blew to sell his wares'

The Whistler is on the previous page. Behind him is Delhi Fort, with its red sandstone walls and deep dry moat—kept dry to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes. The thick walls are a home for many snakes, mainly rat snakes or dhaman, cobras and kraits with their deadly venom and small bodies, banded black and white.

Good selling days are festivals such as Dasara, when effigies of the evil Ravana, with ten heads and twenty arms, and of his two wicked brothers, stand forty feet high outside Delhi city. They are ready to be burnt to celebrate Rama, Sita and Lakshmana's return to their home, after their journey to Lanka (Ceylon) to rescue Sita, Rama's wife, and destroy Ravana and his brothers—as told in the Ramayana. The Hindus of Delhi and the district turn out in their best clothes to see the processions—excited children running everywhere, watched by women with *saris* gracefully draped. The favourite amusement was to be turned in one of the 'giant' wooden wheels—probably nearly ageless—with hanging 'baskets' of country folk, clinging to each other as they reach the top.

I have an old Indian drawing, half completed, of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana in the forest, with delicate leaf tracery and beautifully proportioned design. Hanuman, the helpful monkey god, is shown listening for their enemies, with his ear to the ground.

JUMA MASJID

The Juma Masjid shows white over the Fort wall and its minarets look down on Delhi city—on narrow streets and narrower alleys. The city is enclosed by a wall, lower than the Fort wall, and lacking the red glow of Shahjehan's sandstone walls. On some Fridays, the wide paved courtyard of the mosque is covered with praying Moslems, completely in unison in their prayers. The Jumna, encircling the Fort, can be seen from the minarets; on certain Hindu festivals, its waters are crowded with bathers, wading in the holy river to welcome the new year, or, during an eclipse of the sun, to force demons, who have swallowed the sun, to disgorge it—which they invariably are made to do. The demons are always angry with the sun, as they had been about to drink of the milky way, which would have given them immortality, when they were discovered by the sun, who warned the gods. The moon helped too, and therefore also suffers eclipse.

The Juma Masjid is built of red stone and white marble. It looks across open maidāns to New Delhi, and sees all seven cities of Delhi—written on the ground.

Away in the distance stands the fluted pillar of the Kutab Minar—ancient wonder of the stonemason's art.

One evening, looking from near the Mosque towards the Fort, I saw a rainbow, with its arch centred over the Lahore Gate of the fort, and touching the ground in line with the Jumna bridge on the left and the Elephant Gate on the right—glowing walls of massive masonry, towering clouds behind, grass, green and fresh from the monsoon and, over all, the rainbow.





THE PALACE—THE DIWAN-I-KHÂS

' Rests lightly on the earth '

This is the hall of Private Audience in Shahjehan's palace in Delhi Fort. The fort and palace were completed about three hundred years ago, after taking nearly ten years to build. Shahjehan also built the Taj Mahal at Agra in memory of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Inscribed in Persian above the arches of the Diwan-i-Khas are the words—*' If there is a paradise on the face of the earth, it is this, it is this, it is this '*.

At that time the Jumna river flowed close to the east wall of the fort. Elephants moved with their princes, under the high archways, water filled the moat and gave life to the mile-long wall, by rippling reflections from its surface. State barges arrived at the wide stone steps of the Water Gate.

Sunrise and sunset are the best times to see the fort. At sunset, its great west wall turns to a still deeper red; at sunrise, the palace is cool from the night, and white marble colours with the dawn.

BY PIR GUHL

'Snowbeams from her sun-tipped shoulder'

Pir Guhl, or white peak, lies alongside the Afghan border between Razmak and Wana. It can be seen from many points in the hills and from the plains by the Indus. Between the stony fans, where hill streams spread out to trickle to a sandy end, and Pir Guhl, are fifty miles of wild country. Deep in this is the Shahur Tangi gorge, leading out from the Wana plain.

The hills are of every colour from lightest pink to red, from brown to nearly black, with sand colour as a background to them all. Through these coloured hills, going up the Takki Zam, one can see, from a corner or a crest, Pir Guhl, full white in winter against the clear blue sky of dry lands.

Down this valley, spread out in small streams on the wide stony bed, flows palest blue water, until, after sudden rain, there comes the spate.

The daughter, her child, and the grandmother are travellers—from hills to plains and then to hills again.

The book began its life with a man from the hills, let it end with him too—he walks from the last page, away to his hills, hard, graceful, and a man.



